OFFICIAL
ELECTION MAIL
Authorized by the U.S. Postal Service
®

YOUR **2020**
OFFICIAL
ELECTION MAIL™
KIT 600

UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

January 2020

According to the 2018 Election Administration and Voting Survey, a quarter of the 120 million Americans that cast a ballot in the 2018 general election voted by mail. In preparation for increasing Official Election Mail volume during the 2020 election season, the Postal Service™ has developed the 2020 Official Election Mail Kit to help you in the planning and preparation of election-related mail.

The kit is part of our continued commitment to provide you with the tools necessary to use the U.S. Mail™ as a secure, efficient, and effective way to facilitate the election process. For added security and peace of mind, Official Election Mail is protected by the United States Postal Inspection Service®, the oldest federal law enforcement agency in the nation.

Included in your 2020 Official Election Mail Kit (Kit 600) are the following fact sheets and publications:

- *Official Election Mail Program* — Overview of the many advantages of using mail during the election process.

- *Steps to Creating Your Intelligent Mail® Barcode (IMb®)* — Learn how to create your own IMb to track ballots while in the mailstream and more.

- *Service Type Identifier for Ballot Mail* — Understand how the three-digit code is improving the identification and tracking of ballot mailpieces.

- *Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking and Reporting (IV®-MTR)* — IV-MTR is a service that provides near real-time mail tracking data for letters and flat pieces, bundles, handling units (trays, tubs, and sacks), and containers.

- *Tag 191, Domestic and International Ballots* — Information and guidelines to help your ballot mail get higher visibility during processing.

- *Business Reply Mail® (BRM) and Qualified Business Reply MailTM (QBRMTM)* — Description of the First-Class Mail® service and a step-by-step guide to completing a BRM/QBRM application.

- *Special Procedures APO/FPO/DPO and Overseas Citizens Absentee Ballots* — Tips to ensure absentee ballots reach military personnel and citizens who are overseas.

- *Informed Delivery®* — Discover the benefits associated with creating an Informed Delivery campaign in your electoral district(s).

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- *__Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®)__* — Includes many of the Postal Service's regulations about balloting materials.

- *__USPS® Election Mail Checkbox__* — Use the Election Mail Checkbox in the *PostalOne!*® processing system and on Postage Statement forms to ensure USPS® visibility of all Election Mail entered into the mailstream.

- *__USPS Postmarking Guidelines__* — An explanation of the variety of uses for a postmark, including identifying the date the Postal Service accepted custody of balloting materials, voter registration cards, absentee ballot applications, polling place notifications, and tax filing submissions.

- *__Next Steps__* — Ready to get started? Follow a few simple steps for expert advice on how to create, handle, and send Election Mail.

- Publication 631, *Official Election Mail—Graphic Guidelines and Logos* — Learn proper usage of the Official Election Mail logo for inclusion on mailpieces.

- Publication 632, *State and Local Election Mail—User's Guide* — Contains information that election officials must consider before mailing Election Mail.

Official Election Mail Program

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

U.S. Postal Service Training Program

The U.S. Postal Service® makes it easy to add the benefits of mail to your next election. We provide training, tools, and resources to help you and your staff get started. We'll even help you plan your mailings, improve the quality and accuracy of your address files, and design smart, cost-effective mailpieces. The information below introduces you to the services and assistance we provide.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The Postal Service™ has developed resources to help election officials learn how to prepare, induct, and track mail sent to voters and returned to the Board of Elections. Election mail coordinators are also available to help you through the mailing process and answer any questions. Please use the Election/Political Mail coordinators map at **about.usps.com/gov-services/election-mail/political-mail-map.htm** to find and contact your election mail coordinator.

PLANNING

Planning your mailing in advance will help ensure that it goes out in a timely, efficient manner, which is vital during election season. Our team of election mail coordinators can help you:

- Determine the appropriate class of mail.

- Choose the best postage payment options for outgoing and return mailpieces.

- Identify any extra services that may be needed.

- Provide extra lead time for mailings to armed forces personnel and overseas voters.

ADDRESSING

Address quality is critical to the timely and efficient delivery of your mail. Your address lists should be up-to-date, accurate, and complete. To assist you with this, the Postal Service offers several products and services,

including software, to help you improve the accuracy of your mailings. For information about address quality, go to: **https://postalpro.usps.com/address-quality**.

DESIGNING

Mailpiece design analysts (MDAs) can greatly improve your mail service and reduce postage costs. Postal Service MDAs will help ensure mailpiece quality and show you how to choose a layout that meets Postal Service guidelines and regulations. Customers may contact the MDA Support Center by calling 855-593-6093 or via email to MDA@usps.gov. The MDA Support Center hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time (closed federal holidays).

Visit **pe.usps.com/MailpieceDesign** or review Publication 631, *Official Election Mail — Graphic Guidelines and Logos* for more information.

OFFICIAL ELECTION MAIL LOGO

Display the Official Election Mail logo on your mailpiece to indicate your mail is from a federal, state or local voter registration or election official. You can download the logo at **usps.com/electionmail**.

For information on preparing and sending mail, visit our election officials' mailing resources site at **usps.com/electionmail**. You'll also find resources to help you plan, address, and design Election Mail.

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Steps to Creating Your **Intelligent Mail Barcode**

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

The Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb®) is a 65-bar Postal Service™ barcode used to sort and track letters and flats. The barcode makes participating in multiple Postal Service programs simple by consolidating information for all of the services into one comprehensive location. It also expands mailers' ability to track individual mailpieces and gain greater mailstream visibility.

The IMb can be applied to most Election Mail and is critical for using Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking and Reporting (IV®-MTR) service. The IV-MTR application provides information about when and where the Postal Service sorts a mailpiece on mail-processing equipment. The IMb can also be used for address correction services: manual address correction notices, Address Change Service (ACS™), OneCode ACS®, and Intelligent Mail Full-Service ACS™.

> **PolicyNet Resources**
>
> For more information on OneCode ACS, please review Publication 8, *ACS Product Information Guide.*
>
> Additional information on the Intelligent Mail program is provided in Publication 685, *Publication for Streamlined Mail Acceptance for Letters and Flats.*
>
> **PostalPro™ Resources**
>
> The *IV-MTR User Guide* can be found under the IV-MTR User Guides and Training section at *https://postalpro. usps.com/InformedVisibility*.
>
> For guidance on address quality, please visit *https:// postalpro.usps.com/address-quality*.

STEP 1: DOWNLOAD AND INSTALL THE ENCODER AND FONT

IMb consists of a 20-digit tracking code field [Barcode Identifier, Service Type Identifier (STID), Mailer ID (MID), and Serial Number] and a Routing Code (ZIP Code™) field of up to 11 digits. An encoder is required to convert the numeric digits into a 65-character string representing the bars of the IMb tracking code, and a special font is required to convert the 65 alpha-character string into the IMb bars. Users can download the fonts and computer source code at *https://postalpro.usps.com/ resources/mailing/encoder-software-and-fonts*.

STEP 2: APPLY FOR A MID

A MID is required for the IMb tracking code. New MIDs are assigned through centralized USPS® processes, generally through the MID system at *https://gateway. usps.com/eAdmin/view/signin* (Business Customer Gateway).

> Once the encoder and font are installed, verify the print quality by producing samples, as instructed in the encoder package. The *Intelligent Mail Barcode 4-State Specification USPS-B-3200* and the *Intelligent Mail Barcode Technical Resource Guide* provide extensive technical information about IMbs.

STEP 3: POPULATE THE BARCODE FIELDS

The five IMb fields are the Barcode Identifier, the STID, the MID, the Serial Number, and the Routing Code (ZIP Code). Each field has its own unique set of standards, explained below:

The **Barcode Identifier** field should be "00" (zero-zero) with one exception: automation-price eligible flat mail bearing a printed optional endorsement line (OEL). When mailers prepare flat-size pieces using IMb tracking codes to meet automation-price eligibility requirements, the IMb tracking codes on any pieces bearing printed OELs must contain the Barcode Identifier corresponding to the printed OEL used. See the Barcode ID Reference Table on PostalPro to determine the correct Barcode Identifier.

The attributes that determine which **STID** should appear in an IMb tracking code are the class of mail, the ACS service selected, and whether IV-MTR service is desired. See the Service Type Identifer Reference Table on the PostalPro site or the reverse of the Service Type Identifer for Ballot Mail fact sheet included in this kit to determine the correct STID.

The **MID** is explained in Step 2, above. IMbs must contain a valid MID.

The **Serial Number**, in conjunction with the MID and class of mail, can uniquely identify the mailpiece. Currently, Serial Number uniqueness is not required to qualify for basic automation prices. Intelligent Mail Full-Service requires that mailpieces be uniquely identified, and the tracking code cannot be reused for a period of 45 days. Depending on the length of the MID, the Serial Number is either a nine- or six-digit number.

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(Steps to creating your Intelligent Mail Barcode continued)

The **Routing Code** can contain a 5-digit ZIP Code, 9-digit ZIP+4® code, or 11-digit delivery-point code. To obtain automation discounts, a Delivery-Point ZIP Code from CASS™-certified (Coding Accuracy Support System) software is required. Mailers may opt not to populate the ZIP Code and use the IMb tracking code only for tracking the mailpiece. If populated, it must never be padded with leading or trailing zeros that are not part of a valid 5-, 9-, or 11-digit ZIP Code. The IMb concatenates the five fields in this way:

Six-Digit Mailer ID

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Barcode ID [2N]		Service Type ID [3N]			Mailer ID [6N]						Serial Number [9N]									Routing Code (ZIP Code) [none, 5, 9, or 11N]										

Nine-Digit Mailer ID

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Barcode ID [2N]		Service Type ID [3N]			Mailer ID [9N]									Serial Number [6N]						Routing Code (ZIP Code) [none, 5, 9, or 11N]										

STEP 4: PUT EVERYTHING TOGETHER

Once mailers have selected service(s), received a MID, and devised a unique serial number strategy, they are ready to put the five fields together to form the 20- to 31-digit string, encode it to 65 characters, and convert the 65-character string using the IMb font to form the 65-bar IMb as in the example below. On letters, the IMb can be placed in the address block or in the barcode clear zone. On flats, it can be placed on the address side at least 1/8 inch from the edge of the piece.

Learn more about the IMb at ***https://postalpro.usps.com.***

EXAMPLE: STID of 270 (First-Class Mail®, Intelligent Mail Full-Service option, with IMb IV service, no address correction), MID 123456, uniquely identified by Serial Number 200800001, going to ZIP Code 98765-4321(01), is encoded like this:

Digit String: 00270123456200800001987654321 01

➡ IMb encoder ➡ **Encoded string** (T=Tracker, F=Full Bar, A=Ascender, D=Descender):
TTFAFDADTFFFADTAFAFTTDATDFAAFTDAFDFDFDATFDFTDDDDFADFFDADDTDDTTDAT

➡ IMb font ➡ **IMb:**

To learn about certified mail service providers (MSP), please visit ***https://postalpro.usps.com/node/3816***, where you can also find the latest version of the MSP — Full-Service certified mailers contact list under Featured Resources.

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Service Type Identifier for Ballot Mail

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

A **Service Type Identifier (STID)** is a unique three-digit code that indicates the service type for an individual mailpiece. The service code denotes the mail class, address correction option, and whether Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking and Reporting (IV®-MTR) is being utilized.

As part of the Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb®), STIDs offer mailers near real-time tracking information into both outbound and return Election Mail. STIDs also provide the Postal Service™ with enhanced tracking capabilities that allow us to quickly identify and process on-hand ballots throughout the mail network.

HOW TO DETERMINE THE RIGHT STID:

There are four main aspects to consider:

1. Which class of mail is being used?

First-Class Mail® or USPS Marketing Mail®.

2. What direction is the ballot going?

There are two directions the ballot may be mailed:

a.   From the board of election office to the voter.

b.   From the voter to the board of election office.

3. How should Undeliverable as Addressed (UAA) Election Mail be handled?

Address Change Service (ACS™) is a post-mailing service that provides the Postal Service with instructions on how to handle UAA mail and provides the mailer with electronic Change of Address (COA) information or the reason for nondelivery. In certain instances, First-Class Mail and USPS Marketing Mail Ballots are eligible for Full-Service ACS, OneCode ACS®, Traditional ACS, Manual Notices, or mailers can chose to not use ACS at all.

4. Is tracking required?

Tracking is not required; however, Basic, Nonautomation, and Full-Service IV-MTR can provide mailers with greater insight into when voters have received Election Mail, and in some cases, mailed back their ballots.

HOW TO CHOOSE A STID:

1. Consult the Service Type Identifier Reference Table for Ballot Mail on the reverse of this sheet to determine the correct STID or visit ***https://postalpro. usps.com/service-type-identifiers/STID_Table_ BallotMail***.

2. Create an IMb code using the step-by-step instructions provided in this kit.

For more information regarding STIDs, visit ***https:// postalpro.usps.com/mailing/service-type- identifiers***.

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Service Type Identifier Table

Ballot Mail (Effective August 20, 2018)

Direction	Class of Mail	Address Correction Option	Basic or Nonautomation with IV-MTR*	Full-Service with IV-MTR*
Board of Election to Voter	**First-Class Mail®**	**No Address Corrections**	715	720
		Manual Address Corrections	716	721
		OneCode ACS® – ASR 1* Address Service Requested Opt 1	717	
		OneCode ACS – ASR 2* Address Service Requested Opt 2	718	
		OneCode ACS – CSR 1* Change Service Requested Opt 1	719	
		Full Service ACS™ – ASR 1* Address Service Requested Opt 1		722
		Full-Service ACS – ASR 2* Address Service Requested Opt 2		723
		Full Service ACS – CSR 1* Change Service Requested Opt 1		724
		Full Service ACS – RSR 2* Return Service Requested Opt 2		725
Board of Election to Voter	**USPS Marketing Mail®**	**No Address Corrections**	735	741
		Manual Address Corrections	736	742
		OneCode ACS® – ASR 1* Address Service Requested Opt 1	737	
		OneCode ACS – ASR 2* Address Service Requested Opt 2	738	
		OneCode ACS – CSR 1* Change Service Requested Opt 1	739	
		Traditional ACS – CSR 1* Change Service Requested Opt 1	740	
		Full Service ACS™ – ASR 1* Address Service Requested Opt 1		743
		Full-Service ACS – ASR 2* Address Service Requested Opt 2		744
		Full Service ACS – CSR 1* Change Service Requested Opt 1		745
		Full Service ACS – RSR 2* Return Service Requested Opt 2		746
Voter to Board of Election	**First-Class Mail®**	**Return Ballot First-Class Mail Reply Envelopes**	777	
		Return Ballot Business Reply Mail by ZIP Envelopes	778	
		Return Ballot Permit Reply Mail by ZIP Envelopes	779	

* Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking & Reporting

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Informed Visibility Mail Tracking and Reporting

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

The Informed Visibility® Mail Tracking and Reporting (IV®-MTR) application provides election officials with near real-time and expanded visibility of mailpieces as they move through the mailstream. These updates enable you to better plan Election Mail resources and receive data when and how you want it.

IV-MTR expands visibility beyond physical scans of mailpieces by leveraging the intelligence of Full-Service Intelligent Mail® and nesting associations. For example, IV-MTR creates assumed handling events for nested mail whenever the mail aggregate containing the nested mail is scanned.

HOW DOES IV-MTR HELP ELECTION OFFICIALS?

For outgoing mail, IV-MTR helps:

- Obtain near real-time notification when your mail receives its last processing scan.

- Identify mail delivery trends and predicted delivery dates.

- Know when mailpieces reach their destination so you can better manage election activities.

For incoming reply mail, IV-MTR helps:

- Obtain near real-time notification when your return mail enters the mailstream.

- Know when voters' return items are on the way and where they are in the Postal Service™ supply chain.

HOW DO I GET STARTED WITH IV-MTR?

To get started with IV-MTR, you need to register for a Business Customer Gateway (BCG) account, enable the IV-MTR service, and set up your Election Mail data feeds. Step-by-step instructions are available in the **Applying for Access** presentation on the IV-MTR PostalPro™ page, **https://postalpro.usps.com/InformedVisibility**, under IV-MTR User Guides and Training.

Learn More: **https://postalpro.usps.com/InformedVisibility**

Get Assistance: IV® Solutions Center
InformedVisibility@usps.gov
1-800-238-3150, Option #2
7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday (closed federal holidays)

To learn about certified mail service providers (MSP), please visit at **https://postalpro.usps.com/node/3816**. The latest version of *MSP - Full-Service Certified Mailers* contact list can be found on this page under Featured Resources.

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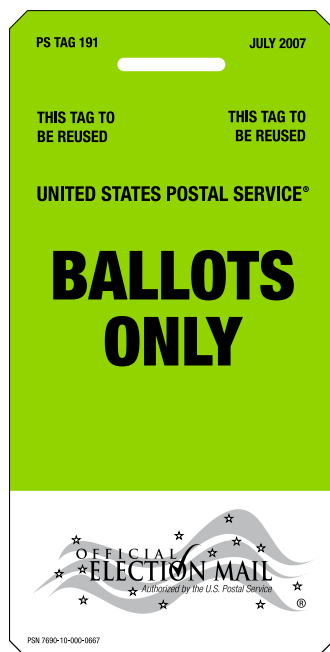
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Tag 191, Domestic and International Ballots

The Postal Service™ recommends the use of green **Tag 191, *Domestic and International Ballots***, to identify trays and sacks that contain ballot mail. Although use of the tag is optional, it provides greater visibility to containers of ballot mail as they move through Postal Service processing and distribution operations.

Tag 191 may only be used to identify ballot mail addressed for domestic or international delivery. The tag cannot be used to identify containers of other types of Election Mail such as polling place notices, voter registration notices, or other election-related materials. Tag 191 may not be used for Political Mail.

AFFIX TAG 191 TO THE MAIL CONTAINER AS FOLLOWS:

- **Strapped Letter Trays:** Using a plastic twist tie, attach Tag 191 to the strap at the end of the tray that bears the tray label.

- **Non-strapped Letter Trays:** For trays permitted to be tendered without strapping, attach Tag 191 to the tray with a rubber band that is double-looped through the tray handhold at the end that bears the tray label.

- **Sacks and Flat Trays with Flat-Size Mail:** Depending on the type of sack, attach Tag 191 to either the strap or label holder on the sack.

Availability:

Tags are available at your local Post Office™ or your Business Mail Entry Unit, which can be found at ***https://postalpro.usps.com/node/1623***. The tags can also be ordered online at ***https://about.usps.com/gov-services/election-mail/***.

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Business Reply Mail and Qualified Business Reply Mail

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

Business Reply Mail® (BRM) and Qualified Business Reply Mail™ (QBRM™) are First-Class Mail® services that enable you to pay the return postage (including a per-piece fee), for only the ballots returned to your election office. You can distribute BRM or QBRM Election Mail and have it returned to you at any Post Office™.

The mailpieces you distribute need to conform to a specific format, including use of a unique ZIP+4® code assigned by the Postal Service™. Proofs for QBRM must be approved by the Postal Service and bear an Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb®). QBRM can only be used on automation-compatible cards and letter-size mail weighing up to and including 2 ounces. For more information on BRM and QBRM, see *Quick Service Guide 505* and *Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) 505.1.1* and *1.6* available at **https://pe.usps.com**.

HOW DOES QBRM BENEFIT THE ELECTION PROCESS?

- Automatic mailpiece counting and debiting simplifies billing for states and counties.

- Unique IMb or ZIP+4 increases mailpiece visibility and tracking.

- Prepaid postage facilitates easy voting for citizens.

HOW DO I GET STARTED WITH BRM/QBRM?

1. Discuss your BRM/QBRM needs with a mailing requirements clerk. Contact the Mailing and Shipping Solutions Center, toll-free at 877-672-0007. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Central Time (closed federal holidays).

2. Complete and then submit PS Form 3615, *Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile* and PS Form 6805, *BRM/QBRM Application for ZIP+4 Code Assignment/Validation and QBRM Approval* to the mailing requirements clerk.

3. Set up an IMb and a Mailer ID (MID) with the help of your election mail coordinator at **https://gateway. usps.com/eAdmin/view/signin**.

  a. For more information on creating an IMb for Election Mail, see the IMb Fact Sheet included in this kit.

4. Design a new BRM/QBRM return ballot envelope with advice from a mailpiece design analyst (MDA). Customers with mailpiece design requests may contact the MDA Support Center either by calling 855-593-6093, or by emailing *MDA@usps.gov*.

  a. Mailpiece designs must comply with the following directives:

    i. Publication 631 — *Official Election Mail — Graphic Guidelines and Logos.*

    ii. Publication 632 — *State and Local Election Mail – User's Guide.*

    iii. Kit 600 — *the 2020 Official Election Mail Program Kit.*

    iv. DMM 201, 204, 505, and 703.8.0.

  b. Resources for mailpiece design include:

    i. The Automated Business Reply Mail (ABRM) tool on the Business Customer Gateway, available at **https://gateway.usps.com/eAdmin/view/ signin**.

      (**Note:** The ABRM tool does not support the use of the Official Election Mail logo or unique serialization of barcodes which are both election community best practices.)

    ii. Advice from an MDA.

    iii. A printer/design professional or mail service provider.

5. Return PS Form 6805, *BRM/QBRM Application for ZIP+4 Code Assignment/Validation and QBRM Approval* with 25 samples or paper mockups to ensure compliance with Postal Service regulations and processing systems. The application and 25 samples should be submitted to the Post Office where the BRM/QBRM will be returned. That Post Office will initiate a help desk ticket with the MDA, and will work with you to finalize the approval process.

Customers may contact the MDA Support Center by calling 855-593-6093 or via email to *MDA@usps.gov*. The MDA Support Center hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time (closed federal holidays).

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Special Procedures: **APO/FPO/DPO and Overseas Citizens Absentee Ballots**

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

September 1, 2020 – November 30, 2020

The United States Postal Service® and the Military Postal Service Agency have again joined forces to expedite delivery of federal absentee ballots to overseas military personnel. We recognize the important role mail plays in the election process and are committed to ensuring that everyone who votes by mail experiences a smooth, well-organized process — one that provides them with the highest level of trust and confidence.

Program Summary:

- Election officials should mail absentee ballots at least 45 days prior to the November 3, 2020, General Election. All military absentee ballots mailed by election officials from September 1 through November 30, 2020, will be subject to special handling procedures.

- Local election offices are requested to segregate military absentee ballots into bundles for the Chicago and Miami International Service Centers (ISC), which serve as the gateway offices for the military.

- Trays or containers of ballot mail destined for APO/FPO/DPO (Army Post Office/Fleet Post Office/Diplomatic Post Office) addresses and overseas citizens may be identified using Tag 191, *Domestic and International Ballots,* and presented to the Post Office™.

- APO/FPO/DPO absentee ballots will be sent from local Post Office locations to the nearest Processing and Distribution Center for further processing.

- At the ISCs, absentee ballots receive special handling.

ELECTION OFFICIALS: Separate military absentee ballots by preparing bundles for the two ISC military gateways: Chicago and Miami.

Directions for Marking the Bundles:

ISC Name	ISC State Abbreviation	ISC ZIP Code™ Range
Chicago	AE	090–099
Chicago	AP	962–966
Miami	AA	340

If fewer than five (5) pieces will be in a separate bundle, a mixed bundle may be prepared. This bundle must have the facing slip marked, "APO/FPO/DPO MIXED – Absentee Ballots."

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Facing Slips

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APO/FPO/DPO
090 AE IL 62109
Absentee Ballots 090–099

★ OFFICIAL ★
ELECTION MAIL
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APO/FPO/DPO
ADC MIAMI FL 331
Absentee Ballots 340

★ OFFICIAL ★
ELECTION MAIL
Authorized by the U.S. Postal Service ®

APO/FPO/DPO
962 AP IL 62196
Absentee Ballots 962–966

★ OFFICIAL ★
ELECTION MAIL
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APO/FPO/DPO
MIXED
Absentee Ballots

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(Special Procedures continued)

Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act

As mandated by law, election officials are expected to deliver absentee ballots to military personnel, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens at least 45 days prior to a federal election. The Postal Service™ is committed to helping you meet this deadline with proactive planning and mailpiece preparation.

Get started by doing the following:

- Contact your Postal Service election mail coordinator.

- Discuss your timeline and known deadlines.

- Review address files for military and overseas voters and perform any necessary address maintenance.

- Consult Publication 632, *State and Local Election Mail - User's Guide,* or Postal Explorer for tips on how to properly address internationally bound mailpieces at **https://pe.usps.com/text/imm/immc1_008.htm**.

- Determine if your mailpiece meets the postage exemption criteria with postage paid as authorized by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

- Obtain and then affix Tag 191, *Domestic and International Ballots*, to your outbound ballots to your outbound sacks and trays of ballot mail.

For more information, please review Publication 632, *Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) 703.8.2,* or visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program at **https://www. fvap.gov/vao/overview**.

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Informed Delivery

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

Informed Delivery® is a secure, free feature that provides eligible residential consumers with a digital preview of their household's incoming mail and packages. Users can view grayscale images of the exterior, address side of automation-processed letter-sized mailpieces via email, smartphone app, or an online dashboard. The Postal Service™ does not open mail or packages to scan the enclosed content as part of the Informed Delivery service.

Election Official Benefits

✔ **Increased Interaction.** Generate multiple impressions to increase awareness of a voter registration, absentee ballot request, or voted ballot return deadlines through synchronized physical and digital touchpoints.

✔ **Faster Responses.** Use interactive content and clear call-to-actions to help encourage voter response.

Voter Benefits

✔ **Convenience.** Preview incoming Election Mail via email notifications, an online dashboard, or mobile app.

✔ **Visibility and Security.** Check what's arriving and have peace of mind that Election Mail will be delivered.

Get Started with Informed Delivery

1. **Choose Your Submission Method.** An Informed Delivery mailing campaign can be created in either *PostalOne!*® or Mailer Campaign Portal. Consider using *PostalOne!* for your complex mailings, especially mailings that have several different treatments.

2. **Define Your Voter List.** Decide if one treatment will work for all recipients or if you need to have segments within the mailing for specific ZIP Codes™ or counties. If you need to segment your mailing, segregate the groups within your mailing list prior to printing or assigning the Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb®).

3. **Determine Mailer ID (MID) and/or IMb Serial Number Range.** Identify the MID used for the mailing. Ensure your MID is valid and included in the IMb on the physical mailpieces. Lastly, determine your serial number ranges in the IMb. Your mail service provider (printer, ad agency, etc.) will generally have this information.

4. **Produce Your Creative Content.** Design the "ride-along" image that will appear in your campaign. Determine your target URL, as well as the call-to-action (i.e., "Register to Vote"). The more compelling your call-to-action is, the more likely a recipient is to respond. Lastly, decide whether you will use the grayscale image provided by the Postal Service™ or use a color representative image.

5. **Select a Timeline.** You need to consider both the class of mail and where the mail is being entered for your Informed Delivery mailing schedule. Suggested mailing start times are 2-3 days prior to your first expected in-home delivery date and suggested end times are 2-3 days after the last expected delivery date.

6. **Submit Campaign.** Submit your mailing using your selected submission method from Step 1.

7. **Analyze Results.** See how your mailing campaign worked! Download your Post-Campaign Analyses (Summary and Detailed level reports) directly from the Mailer Campaign Portal or get a copy of your Post-Campaign Summary report via email by contacting us at *USPSInformedDeliveryCampaigns@usps.gov*.

Want more information? Visit **https://www.usps.com/business/informed-delivery.htm** or contact your Postal Service sales representative.

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Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

Each election cycle presents a new set of parameters for ballot creation, causing return mailpieces to be different sizes and weights. As a result, many voters do not know the correct amount of postage required to return their ballots by mail.

Effective October 7, 2013, **balloting materials for any election, whether disseminated in hardcopy or electronically, must indicate in a prominent location the proper amount of First-Class Mail® postage that must be applied, except in certain circumstances for balloting materials for military and overseas voters or where postage is prepaid.** This information must be included in the balloting materials (i.e., on the ballot, ballot instructions, mailing instructions, or the envelope) with the marking "First-Class Mail postage must be applied." The marking "Apply First-Class Mail postage here" could be printed in the upper-right corner of the address side of the envelope used by the voter to return the marked ballot to election officials. The Postal Service™ will also accept approved variations of the indicia enumerated above.

The marking requirements will not apply to balloting materials that meet one of the following exceptions:

- The balloting materials fall under the special exemptions for military and overseas voting.

- The ballot is returned under Business Reply Mail® service.

- Return postage is guaranteed through a postage due account.

- Postage on the ballot is prepaid by stamps, meter, or Permit Reply Mail.

Election officials should consult with Postal Service officials to assist with mailpiece design and barcode placement as well as to determine the proper amount of postage required for mailing ballots to voters and the return of marked ballots to election officials. For more information, please see Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) 703.8.0 available at ***https://pe.usps.com***.

NONCOMPLIANT MAILINGS

For mailers who submit ballot mailings that are noncompliant with current return postage requirements, the following acceptance procedure is to be observed: The mailer can submit a written request to the Business Mail Entry manager, requesting a one-time exception to allow the mailing to be accepted. The Pricing and Classification Service Center will review the exception request.

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USPS **Election Mail Checkbox**

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

The Postal Service™ is committed to improving Election Mail processes. Effective January 26, 2014, the Postal Service uses the Election Mail Checkbox in *PostalOne!* processing and our Postage Statement forms (e.g., PS Form 3600-FCM, PS Form 3600-PM, PS Form 3602-N, PS Form 3602-R) to get increased visibility of Election Mail in the mailstream. Please check the "This is Official Election Mail" box for each mailing presented

for acceptance. This provides the Postal Service with important insight into Election Mail volume by entry point that may help with future Postal Service capacity planning.

Examples of the Election Mail Checkbox are illustrated below.

PS Form 3600-FCM, *Postage Statement—First-Class Mail and First-Class Package Service*

PS Form 3602-R, *Postage Statement—USPS Marketing Mail*

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USPS **Postmarking Guidelines**

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

The Postal Service™ recognizes elections as the bedrock of our system of government. We greatly value our role in the election process as well as the relationships we have with election officials.

In response to mailers' and municipal officials' requests, in March 2014, the Postal Service began applying a cancellation mark to all letter pieces processed on USPS® Letter Automation Compatible Postage Cancellation Systems. This improvement enables First-Class Mail® processed on Letter Automation Compatible Postage Cancellation Systems to identify the date the mail was processed at the mail processing facility near origin or drop shipment location (see Figures 1, 2, and 3). The cancellation mark has a variety of uses, including identifying the date the Postal Service accepted custody of balloting materials. Some states use Postal Service cancellation marks when determining if ballots are timely based on state regulations.

Figures 1, 2, and 3
Sample Alternative Cancellation Marks (Images not to scale)

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Next Steps

Fact Sheet for Election Mail

1. Familiarize yourself with the content of Kit 600, the 2020 Official Election Mail Kit.

For your convenience, we have also made Kit 600 available at ***https://about.usps.com/election-mail/election-mail-resources.htm***.

2. Consult with your election mail coordinator.

Election mail coordinators are designated Postal Service™ employees specifically trained to help you with every aspect of the election mailpiece. Coordinators are available to discuss ordering, designing, preparing, and sending Election Mail.

Find your area's coordinator by using the Election/Political Mail coordinators map at ***https://about.usps.com/gov-services/election-mail/political-mail-map.htm***.

3. Work with a mailpiece design analyst (MDA).

The Postal Service recommends that election officials always have all ballot envelope designs reviewed by an MDA. MDAs are experts on Postal Service mailpiece design standards and can ensure that all mailings are compliant with current Postal Service regulations and automation requirements.

For assistance customers may contact an MDA by calling the MDA Support Center at 855-593-6093 or emailing to *MDA@usps.gov*. The MDA Support Center hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time (closed federal holidays). Also, mailpiece design information is available online at ***https://postalpro.usps.com/mailing/mailpiece-design-analyst-mda-customer-service-help-desk***.

4. If you are interested in contracting with a mail service provider (MSP), consider consulting with a Full-Service certified mailer.

An MSP offers a variety of solutions to mail owners seeking assistance with the preparation and presentation of Full-Service presort mailings.

There are many advantages of using an MSP to prepare Election Mail. An MSP can do as follows:

- Provide/manage your address list.

- Print and/or presort your mailing.

- Enter your mailing with the greatest discounts available.

- Manage mailing feedback, such as address correction service data.

- Monitor mail quality reports.

To get started, contact your election mail coordinator and MDA before viewing the most recent list of MSPs at ***https://postalpro.usps.com/certifiedmsps***.

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